

Return to Sport and Recreation Guidance for Participants and Spectators during COVID-19

November 4, 2021

Cooperating for a safe return to sport and recreation

A safe return to sport and recreation will require cooperation from everyone – including participants and their families. You should prepare for changes related to how activities will be organized and coordinated. This may include smaller group sizes, frequent hand washing, limited or no travel, and no shared equipment. Proof of vaccination requirements are also in place for indoor facilities.

Facility operators and sport associations are being asked to create COVID-19 safety plans and adapt activities to ensure a safe and enjoyable return to sport and recreation for all.

To prepare for a safe and enjoyable return to sport and recreation, participants and spectators should follow the guidelines below and review COVID-19 safety information provided to you by your fitness facility and/or sports association. Additional resources include the [Guidance and template safety plan for fitness facilities during COVID-19](#), the [Guidance and template safety plan for sports associations during COVID-19](#), the [Timiskaming Health Unit's COVID-19 information](#) and the [government of Ontario's COVID-19 information](#).

Proof of vaccination

Proof of vaccination is required in higher-risk indoor public settings where face coverings cannot always be worn, including **indoor fitness facilities**. People entering must show proof of vaccination and ID that lists their birthdate.

Activities related to organized sports have the potential to enhance COVID-19 transmission. Specifically, close contact, forceful exhalation, prolonged exposure, crowded indoor spaces, and masks and face coverings removed during physical activity contribute to enhanced likelihood of COVID-19 transmission.

The people listed below must show proof of vaccination or a medical exemption before entering an area where organized sports are played and/or practiced indoors.

- Sports participants aged 18+
- Coaches, officiants, volunteers, and spectators aged 12+

Proof of vaccination is not currently required in the indoor area of a facility for people aged 12-17 years who are **actively participating** in an organized sport in the Timiskaming Health Unit coverage area. However, some fitness facilities and sports associations may have additional proof of vaccination requirements in place.

For more information and to print your proof of vaccination, click [here](#).

Monitor for symptoms of COVID-19

- Familiarize yourself with and regularly monitor for [symptoms of COVID-19](#).
- Perform a [COVID-19 self-assessment](#) before attending or participating in any activity, even if you are fully vaccinated. Stay home if you do not pass the self-assessment or if you are feeling sick. Call Timiskaming Health Unit at 705-647-4305 ext. 7 for screening.
- Expect to be actively screened upon arrival at the activity or fitness facility, even if you are fully vaccinated. You will also be required to provide your contact information in order to enter. If you do not pass the screening tool, you will not be allowed to participate.

Arrival and reception

- Provide your name and phone number so that you can be reached if contact tracing is required.
- Arrive no more than 5 minutes before your booking or the start of your sport and leave once you have finished your workout or at the end of your booking time.
- Cancel your booking if you can no longer attend.
- Avoid congregating, including in a reception area or locker room.
- Arrive dressed for your activity to limit the use of locker and change rooms.

Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

- Use handwashing facilities upon entry and departure, when putting on and taking off sporting gloves, and as requested by the fitness facility or sports association.
- Pack a bottle of your own hand sanitizer in your activity bag and use it as needed.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth. Cover your cough and sneeze with a tissue or cough and sneeze into your elbow, not your hand. Avoid spitting and clearing nasal passages.

Follow face mask requirements

- Masks are required by law in all indoor public spaces. Participants and spectators should wear a mask indoors and outdoors when it's difficult to maintain a distance of 2 meters from people they don't live with. More information is available at [this link](#).
- Masks are not required when engaging in an athletic or fitness activity. However, masks must be worn when participants are not actively engaging in athletic or fitness activities, for example when sitting out on the sidelines or when waiting to use a fitness machine.

Maintain a 2-meter physical distance

- Some facilities and sports association may continue to require physical distancing throughout the facility, in designated areas, or during designated activities.
- If physical distancing is required, maintain a distance of at least 2 meters from others, except members of your household and caregivers.
- Expect that sports activities may be modified to enable physical distancing.
- In some settings, physical distancing may not be required but there may be a large enough area for participants to maintain physical distancing, if they prefer to do so.

Equipment

- Bring your own equipment when possible. If equipment is shared (for instance, weight machine), follow the fitness facility or sports association's requirements for cleaning and disinfection.
- Do not share personal items, especially water bottles. Personal equipment should be labeled with the name of the owner.
- Place your equipment in a designated area where other people do not have to move your items in order to reach their own.
- Your equipment, including sport gloves, should be visibly clean.

Travel

Keeping sport and recreation activities local is preferred. Travel to other regions in the province and out-of-province should be limited. Follow provincial and federal travel restrictions.

Group celebrations

- During the sporting activity, physical distancing may be maintained during group celebrations and other customs. Avoid activities like handshakes, high-fives, fist bumps and chest bumps.
- Often, good public health measures are in place during sporting events. However, at an after-party or post-game celebration, frequently people relax and may not follow public health measures. This is when COVID-19 has an opportunity to spread. Continue to follow public health measures during team celebrations.

Cheering, shouting, and singing

Cheering loudly, shouting, and singing are high-risk activities.

- Music should be avoided or kept at a low volume to avoid the need to shout.
- Participants should not sing along to music.
- Spectators should not shout or cheer loudly.

Spectators

Spectators must wear masks indoors. Spectators are also required to wear masks outdoors, unless they can maintain a distance of 2 meters from people they don't live with.